

Report To Senate

ACLU Alleges FBI Terrorism

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SAN DIEGO — The American Civil Liberties Union yesterday completed a report for Senate investigators alleging that the FBI recruited a band of right-wing terrorists and supplied them with money and weapons to attack young antiwar demonstrators.

The 5,000-word account prepared for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence contains what ACLU lawyers described as "newly established evidence" linking the FBI to at least two assassination plots here.

The lawyers, H. Peter Young and Mark D. Rosenbaum of the ACLU Foundation of Southern California, said the allegations to be sent, probably today, to the Senate committee "document in detail" the FBI's sponsorship in 1971 and 1972 of a San Diego group calling itself "The Secret Army Organization."

Told of the ACLU assertions, a spokesman for the FBI said the bureau had had "nothing to do" with the establishment of the so-called Secret Army Organization, "nor did we have anything to do with the direction of its activities."

According to the ACLU report, the Secret Army Organization was set up "on instructions of FBI officials" to serve as agents' provocateurs, inciting disorders to expose "domestic radicals," particularly campus leaders of the New Left protesting the war in Southeast Asia.

The paramilitary extremist organization, consisting of about a dozen members locally with others scattered throughout Southern California, was described by the ACLU as an outgrowth of an elaborate interagency espionage apparatus organized "at the direction of Richard M. Nixon" early in his administration to intimidate and silence domestic critics.

The group's acts of terrorism, allegedly carried out in San Diego on instructions from the FBI, range from espionage, vandalism and mail theft to bombings, assassination plots and shootings, according to the report.

The ACLU charges followed by two days the FBI's acknowledgement, in a 256-page document, that it conducted counterintelligence operations between May 1968 and April 1971 under the code name Cointelpro. These operations were aimed at the New Left and were designed to harass and discredit campus antiwar and leftist groups.

The ACLU maintained, however, that FBI sponsorship of the "Secret Army" terrorism continued into 1972.

The accusations contained in the report to the Senate committee go considerably beyond those of a \$10.6-million damage suit filed by ACLU attorneys in federal district court here Jan. 6 on behalf of Peter G. Bohmer, a discharged economics professor at San Diego State University, and Paula Tharp, a companion.

Miss Tharp was wounded on Jan. 6, 1972, when shots were fired into Bohmer's Ocean Beach home here from an automobile carrying several members of the so-called Secret Army.

In subsequent court proceedings, it was brought out that Steven L. Christiansen, an FBI agent identified by court witnesses as the "control" for the Secret Army Organization, concealed in his home for nearly six months the automatic pistol used in that attack while the police were searching for evidence.

Bohmer, an avowed Marxist, and Miss Tharp, formerly employed by an underground newspaper twice wrecked in nighttime Secret Army raids, organized the San Diego convention coalition in mid-1971. The coalition was formed to bring thousands of youthful demonstrators to San Diego to disrupt the 1972 Republican National Convention before the site was switched to Miami Beach.

The ACLU report says John Rasperry, whom it identified as an FBI informer, has admitted that, in the winter of 1971-1972, the bureau instructed him to assassinate Bohmer, but that the attempt was never carried out.

Rasperry is also quoted as saying that he was instructed to intercept and open Bohmer's mail and to plant several M16 rifles in the former professor's possessions to facilitate his arrest.

Another FBI-directed plot to assassinate Bohmer was allegedly set up in April 1972 with Gil Romero, a member of the San Diego Police Dept.'s antisubversive "Red Squad," also described as an FBI undercover agent.

According to the report, Bohmer and Linco Bueno, a member of the Brown Berets, a left-wing Chicano organization, were to be lured across the Mexican border to a desolate area near Tijuana. There, they were to be killed by the Mexican federal police for possession of a cache of smuggled weapons.

The plot was abandoned, Young reported, presumably when the Republican convention was moved to Miami Beach.

The ACLU lawyers said Romero was also offered \$4,000 by his FBI "control" if he would implicate Bohmer in the shooting of a San Diego police officer in the city's Ocean Beach section.

In the pending \$10.6-million lawsuit, former President Nixon's name heads a list of 58 defendants, including officials of the FBI, the CIA, the National Security Council and half a dozen other government agencies, as well as most of the defendants in the Watergate case.

Nixon, according to federal court records, accepted a summons at his home in San Clemente on Jan. 14.

The FBI's creation of the Secret Army Organization here, as a successor to the paramilitary Minutemen broken up by the local authorities in 1970, was said by the ACLU to have been an extension of earlier espionage activities by the bureau, including a 1969 operation with the code name "Inlet."

Under "Inlet," the FBI allegedly made daily intelligence reports, involving "demonstrators and domestic radicals," to John N. Mitchell, then attorney general, to Nixon by way of H. R. Haldeman, the former White House chief of staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, former chief adviser to Nixon on domestic affairs.

The ACLU alleged that, when the FBI set up the Secret Army Organization here in 1971 in advance of the Republican convention, it chose as one of its two leaders Howard B. Godfrey, a former San Diego fireman, elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and for three years an FBI informer in the Minutemen.

Godfrey testified at the 1971 trial of another member of the secret organization, who was convicted of bombing a motion-picture theater, that the FBI furnished him or paid for \$10,000 to \$20,000 worth of weapons and explosives for the so-called Secret Army Organization over five years. As a member of the Minutemen and later of the Secret Army Organization, he said he was paid about \$250 a month by the bureau.

In addition to the FBI's direct control over the Secret Army, the White House allegedly maintained contact with the group through Donald H. Segretti, later convicted for directing a campaign of political espionage and sabotage against the Democrats in 1972.

Segretti was quoted by the ACLU as having told the Secret Army that any potential troublemakers at the 1972 Republican convention would be "gotten rid of." This was apparently a reference to the so-called Liddy plan alluded to during the Senate Watergate hearings, whereby the leaders of anti-Nixon elements would be kidnaped and taken to Mexico.

The plan was devised by G. Gordon Liddy, former counsel to the Committee for the Re-election of the President, who was convicted of conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping in the Watergate case.

After the shooting of Miss Tharp, the ACLU said, the FBI acted swiftly to protect Godfrey and the Secret Army Organization.

Godfrey was never arrested for any of the Secret Army's acts of violence, allegedly "at the insistence of the FBI," and is now employed by the California State Fire Marshal's Office in Sacramento.